



DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Southern Natural Gas Company, L.L.C.

Docket No. CP12-112-000

NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE AN
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED
NORTH MAIN LOOP LINE ABANDONMENT PROJECT
AND
REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) that will discuss the environmental impacts of the North Main Loop Line Abandonment Project (Project) involving abandonment, construction and operation of facilities by Southern Natural Gas Company, L.L.C. (SNG) in Calhoun and Cleburne Counties, Alabama. The Commission will use this EA in its decision-making process to determine whether the project is in the public convenience and necessity.

This notice announces the opening of the scoping process the Commission will use to gather input from the public and interested agencies on the project. Your input will

Public

help the Commission staff determine what issues they need to evaluate in the EA. Please note that the **scoping period will close on June 16, 2012**. Further details on how to submit written comments are in the Public Participation section of this notice.

This notice is being sent to the Commission's current environmental mailing list for this project. State and local government representatives should notify their constituents of this proposed project and encourage them to comment on their areas of concern.

If you are a landowner receiving this notice, and you are contacted by a representative of SNG about the acquisition of an easement to construct, operate, and maintain the proposed facilities, please note that the company would seek to negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement. However, if the Commission approves the project, that approval conveys with it the right of eminent domain. Therefore, if easement negotiations fail to produce an agreement, the pipeline company could initiate condemnation proceedings where compensation would be determined in accordance with state law.

SNG provided landowners with a fact sheet prepared by the FERC entitled "An Interstate Natural Gas Facility On My Land? What Do I Need To Know?". This fact sheet addresses a number of typically-asked questions, including the use of eminent domain and how to participate in the Commission's proceedings. It is also available for viewing on the FERC website (www.ferc.gov).

Summary of the Proposed Project

SNG proposes to abandon a portion of its approximately 70 year old North Main Loop Line in Calhoun and Cleburne Counties, Alabama. The pipeline developed wrinkle bends which caused a pipeline failure in 2009. According to SNG, its project would eliminate a portion of the wrinkle bends on SNG's North Main Loop Line and enhance its integrity. The replacement section will continue to provide safe reliable natural gas supplies to the eastern Alabama region.

The Project would consist of the following:

- abandonment in-place of approximately 19.5 miles of 24-inch-diameter natural gas pipeline, beginning at the DeArmanville Compressor Station milepost (MP) 380.7, continuing through the Heflin Gate and ending at the Rome-Calhoun Gate (MP 400.2);
- remove the existing pig launcher at the existing Chevron Road Launcher (MP 380.7) and install it at the existing Rome-Calhoun Gate site¹;
- abandon in-place the following:
 - a side valve assembly connecting the North Main Loop Line to SNG's White Plains Line at approximate MP 385.6; and

¹ A "pig" is a tool that the pipeline company inserts into and pushes through the pipeline for cleaning the pipeline, conducting internal inspections, or other purposes.

- a 24-inch main line valve assembly at SNG's Heflin gate.
- cut and cap the 24-inch-diameter North Main Loop Line at 13 road crossings;
- install 2.2 miles of 3-inch-diameter natural gas pipeline between MP 389.8 and MP 392.0 (B-Line);
- repair or remove two exposed segments of 24-inch-diameter North Main Loop Line at MPs 392.2 and 393.3; and
- remove a pipeline drip assembly at approximate MP 382.5 and relocate a launcher currently located at the DeArmanville Compressor Station (approximate MP 380.7) to SNG's Rome-Calhoun Gate (approximate MP 400.2).

The general location of the project facilities is shown in Appendix 1.²

² The appendices referenced in this notice will not appear in the Federal Register. Copies of appendices were sent to all those receiving this notice in the mail and are available at www.ferc.gov using the link called "eLibrary" or from the Commission's Public Reference Room, 888 First Street NE, Washington, DC 20426, or call (202) 502-8371. For instructions on connecting to eLibrary, refer to the last page of this notice.

Land Requirements for Construction

Construction of the proposed facilities and abandonment activities would disturb about 36.1 acres of land. Following construction, SNG would maintain about 10 acres for permanent operation of the Project's B-Line facilities; the remaining acreage would be restored and revert to former uses. Following completion of the project, SNG will continue to operate the other pipelines in the right-of-way of the abandoned 19.5 miles of pipeline. Therefore, SNG will not relinquish its rights under its existing easement agreements.

The EA Process

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the Commission to take into account the environmental impacts that could result from an action whenever it considers the issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity. NEPA also requires us³ to discover and address concerns the public may have about proposals. This process is referred to as "scoping." The main goal of the scoping process is to focus the analysis in the EA on the important environmental issues. By this notice, the Commission requests public comments on the scope of the issues to address in the EA. We will consider all filed comments during the preparation of the EA.

³ "We," "us," and "our" refer to the environmental staff of the Commission's Office of Energy Projects.

In the EA we will discuss impacts that could occur as a result of the construction and operation of the proposed project under these general headings:

- geology and soils;
- land use;
- water resources, fisheries, and wetlands;
- cultural resources;
- vegetation and wildlife;
- air quality and noise;
- endangered and threatened species; and
- public safety.

We will also evaluate reasonable alternatives to the proposed project or portions of the project, and make recommendations on how to lessen or avoid impacts on the various resource areas.

The EA will present our independent analysis of the issues. The EA will be available in the public record through eLibrary. Depending on the comments received during the scoping process, we may also publish and distribute the EA to the public for an allotted comment period. We will consider all comments on the EA before making our recommendations to the Commission. To ensure we have the opportunity to consider

and address your comments, please carefully follow the instructions in the Public Participation section of this notice.

With this notice, we are asking agencies with jurisdiction by law and/or special expertise with respect to the environmental issues of this project to formally cooperate with us in the preparation of the EA⁴. Agencies that would like to request cooperating agency status should follow the instructions for filing comments provided under the Public Participation section of this notice.

Consultations Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

In accordance with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's implementing regulations for section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we are using this notice to initiate consultation with applicable State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and to solicit their views and those of other government agencies, interested Indian tribes, and the public on the project's potential effects on historic properties.⁵ We will define the project-specific Area of Potential Effects (APE) in consultation with the SHPO as the project develops. On natural gas facility projects, the APE at a minimum encompasses

⁴ The Council on Environmental Quality regulations addressing cooperating agency responsibilities are at Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1501.6.

⁵ The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations are at Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 800. Those regulations define historic properties as any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

all areas subject to ground disturbance (examples include construction right-of-way, contractor/pipe storage yards, pig launcher removal and installation, and access roads). Our EA for this project will document our findings on the impacts on historic properties and summarize the status of consultations under section 106.

Public Participation

You can make a difference by providing us with your specific comments or concerns about the project. Your comments should focus on the potential environmental effects, reasonable alternatives, and measures to avoid or lessen environmental impacts. The more specific your comments, the more useful they will be. To ensure that your comments are timely and properly recorded, please send your comments so that the Commission receives them in Washington, DC on or before **June 16, 2012**.

For your convenience, there are three methods which you can use to submit your comments to the Commission. In all instances please reference the project docket number (CP12-112-000) with your submission. The Commission encourages electronic filing of comments and has expert staff available to assist you at (202) 502-8258 or efiling@ferc.gov.

- (1) You can file your comments electronically using the [eComment](#) feature on the Commission's website (www.ferc.gov) under the link to [Documents and](#)

[Filings](#). This is an easy method for interested persons to submit brief, text-only comments on a project;

- (2) You can file your comments electronically using the [eFiling](#) feature on the Commission's website (www.ferc.gov) under the link to [Documents and Filings](#). With eFiling, you can provide comments in a variety of formats by attaching them as a file with your submission. New eFiling users must first create an account by clicking on "[eRegister](#)." You must select the type of filing you are making. If you are filing a comment on a particular project, please select "Comment on a Filing"; or
- (3) You can file a paper copy of your comments by mailing them to the following address:

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street NE, Room 1A
Washington, DC 20426

Environmental Mailing List

The environmental mailing list includes federal, state, and local government representatives and agencies; elected officials; environmental and public interest groups; Native American Tribes; other interested parties; and local libraries and newspapers. This list also includes all affected landowners (as defined in the Commission's regulations) who are potential right-of-way grantors, whose property may be used temporarily for project purposes, or who own homes within certain distances of aboveground facilities, and anyone who submits comments on the project. We will update the environmental mailing list as the analysis proceeds to ensure that we send the information related to this environmental review to all individuals, organizations, and government entities interested in and/or potentially affected by the proposed project.

If the EA is published for distribution, copies will be sent to the environmental mailing list for public review and comment. **If you would prefer to receive a paper copy of the document instead of the CD version or would like to remove your name from the mailing list, please return the attached Information Request (Appendix 2).**

Becoming an Intervenor

In addition to involvement in the EA scoping process, you may want to become an "intervenor" which is an official party to the Commission's proceeding. Intervenor play

a more formal role in the process and are able to file briefs, appear at hearings, and be heard by the courts if they choose to appeal the Commission's final ruling. An intervenor formally participates in the proceeding by filing a request to intervene. Instructions for becoming an intervenor are available on the Commission's website at:

<http://www.ferc.gov/help/how-to/intervene.asp>.

Additional Information

Additional information about the project is available from the Commission's Office of External Affairs, at **(866) 208-FERC**, or on the FERC website at www.ferc.gov using the "eLibrary" link. Click on the eLibrary link, click on "General Search" and enter the docket number, excluding the last three digits in the Docket Number field (i.e., CP12-112). Be sure you have selected an appropriate date range. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support at FercOnlineSupport@ferc.gov or toll free at (866) 208-3676, or for TTY, contact (202) 502-8659. The eLibrary link also provides access to the texts of formal documents issued by the Commission, such as orders, notices, and rulemakings.

In addition, the Commission now offers a free service called eSubscription which allows you to keep track of all formal issuances and submittals in specific dockets. This can reduce the amount of time you spend researching proceedings by automatically providing you with notification of these filings, document summaries, and direct links to the documents. Go to www.ferc.gov/esubscribenow.htm.

Finally, public meetings or site visits will be posted on the Commission's calendar located at www.ferc.gov/EventCalendar/EventsList.aspx along with other related information.

Dated: May 17, 2012

Kimberly D. Bose,

Secretary.

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